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October 21, 2020

Honorable Carl Heastie  
Speaker of the New York Assembly  
Legislative Office Building Room 932  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie,

On behalf of our organizations, we would like to thank you for your leadership during this pandemic. Your actions advancing legislative proposals undoubtedly have saved lives and protected the health and well-being of New Yorkers.

We, the undersigned groups, respectfully request that the Assembly consider A.10836 (Cruz) – an act to create a task force to study the state of long-term care services in the state. The Senate version of the bill S.8633 (May) has already passed the Senate with bipartisan support.

The bill establishes a task force to examine the state of long-term care in New York, both home-based and facility-based, and to consider potential models for improvement. The task force would also examine the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on both long-term care and the broader long-term care system across the state.

New York State is reimagining many of the systems we depend on, such as schools and hospitals. Another critical system that requires substantial consideration, especially in light of the pandemic, is our long-term care system.

The severe health impacts of COVID-19 can occur across all ages. Still, given the congregated nature of older adults with underlying medical conditions residing in nursing homes and other adult care facilities and those receiving care at home, older New Yorkers are among those at the highest risk of death from COVID-19.

We strongly support the establishment of this legislation to create the “Reimagining Long-Term Care Task Force.” The Task Force would work with consumers, long-term care providers, home care agencies, and unions on a coordinated, statewide basis to examine the pandemic’s impact and seek solutions for the needs of the long-term care system. The legislation requires the Task Force to address supply issues, staffing needs and shortages,

Real Possibilities

resident safety needs for those being admitted into facilities, public reporting of facilities with COVID-19 cases among residents and staff, and communication protocols for families that include the right to virtual visitation of loved ones in facilities. In addition, the Task Force would then provide recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature about building a more resilient long-term care system to protect residents' and clients' overall wellbeing in any future pandemic.

We believe that the creation of the Reimagining Long-Term Care Task Force and the recommendations that would be provided would ensure that even in times of crisis, the health and safety of New York's seniors who are living in nursing homes, other adult care facilities, and receiving care at home will be prioritized.

Thank you for considering this request to consider for passage A.10836 to protect our most vulnerable older adult population in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

Sincerely,



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State Director  
AARP New York



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